

Center Barrel Rolls into New Year

Nicolette Cormier

The F/A-18 Center Barrel Replacement Plus (CBR+) and stand-up initiative at NAVAIR Jacksonville, Fla., continues to progress towards activation planned for August of 2003.

The program rolled successfully into the New Year January 6 with artisan training for wing-lug line boring and precision drilling of the missile/FLIR (Forward Looking Infra-Red) attach points on the center fuselage. (Attach points are ordnance stations four and six, where either missiles or a FLIR sensor pod will be mounted when the aircraft returns to the fleet.) Nacelle installation and fixture alignment training is scheduled to start approximately February 18.

“The success of CBR and the CBR+ program at NAVAIR, North Island, in San Diego Calif., and the number of required installs for LOT 17 and below aircraft has prompted the stand up of an East Coast CBR+ operation at NAVAIR Jacksonville,” said Darrell Kent, F/A-18 V.P. Industrial Operations.

The stand-up process at Jacksonville has been on-going for four months. Set-up time is expected to be about a year and involves both technical and mechanical training as well as equipment set-up.

“The primary challenges for the Jacksonville set-up were the shortage of tooling and lack of depot level equipment,” said Richard Bush F/A-18 Special Project Officer. “Once that was resolved we started to identify a number of specific tasks and set up training for our people. We have two people over at North Island right now getting hands-on training on precision



Center barrel repair fixture, designed by NAVAIR North Island, holds an F/A-18 Hornet (with center barrel removed) during the center barrel replacement process.

missile/FLIR drilling.”

A center barrel repair fixture, designed by NAVAIR North Island, is in the process of being installed at Jacksonville. The repair fixture facilitates separation of the nose and tail section from the middle of the aircraft allowing the removal and replacement of the center barrel.

The first center barrel replacement occurred in 1987 after an F/A-18 made a hard carrier landing that caused severe damage to the center barrel, which at that time was thought impossible to repair. Normally the airframe would have been broken up for parts; instead engineers from North Island came up with a repair process that has saved the Navy millions of dollars, and provided a cost effective repair extension for the Hornet Fleet.

To date, 12 center barrels have

been replaced. Four of these have been replaced through the CBR+ program, which began in December 2001. CBR+ is one of the most ambitious engineering change proposals ever attempted by the F/A-18 program. The program objective is to restore older F/A-18C and D models by replacing the center barrel and other critical components as they come up for scheduled depot maintenance. Approximately 355 F/A-18s are scheduled to be inducted for this maintenance through 2013.

Looking to the future, the Navy has recently awarded the Northrop Grumman Corp a \$29,957,135 modification to a previously awarded firm-fixed-priced contract for 37 center barrel kits and 12 sets of nacelles for the F/A-18C and D aircraft. These kits are scheduled for installation at NAVAIR North Island and Jacksonville during FY05.



Blue Angels Commence Winter Training

The Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, has made its annual deployment to Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro, Calif., to prepare for the 2003 show season.

The 10-week winter training concludes in early March after the team completes a minimum of 120 flights during a rigorous six-days-a-week, three-flights-per-day schedule.

The team performs its first public flight demonstration of 2003 at the El Centro base March 15 and will conclude the season November 8 at Naval Air Station Pensacola.

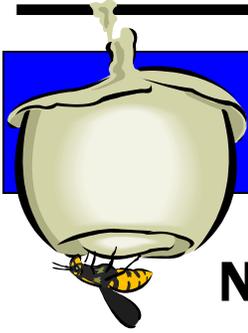
The Blue Angels will perform 70 shows at 34 locations throughout the United States and Canada during the 2003 season. For more information on the Blue Angels show schedule log on to the Blue Angels Website at <http://www.navy.com/blueangels>



SHARP Shows its Stuff Aboard the Nimitz



At sea aboard USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) Jan. 13, 2003 -- A Shared Airborne Reconnaissance Pod (SHARP), installed on the bottom of an F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to the "Black Aces" of Strike Fighter Squadron Four One (VFA-41), is brought aboard after completing a mission. The SHARP is a multi-functioned reconnaissance pod, adaptable to several airborne platforms for tactical manned airborne reconnaissance. It is capable of simultaneous airborne and ground screening capabilities, and is designed to replace the Navy's Tactical Airborne Reconnaissance Pod System (TARPS), currently flown on the F-14 Tomcat. *Nimitz* is currently undergoing Composite Unit Training Exercise (COMTUEX) off the coast of San Diego, Calif. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Yesenia Rosas



Jive from the Hive ...

New Team Lead for Systems Development

Congratulations to Greg Drohat, who has been promoted within the NAVAIR F/A-18 Systems Development Team. He will co-lead the team with Capt. Dave Moroney. Drohat took over the position January 6 after a successful tenure as E/F Air Vehicle Team Lead.

During the production phase of the F/A-18E/F, Drohat worked as the E/F Subsystems IPT Lead. He was part of a Fuel Tank Team, which won the FY2000 Department of the Navy Competition and Procurement Excellence Award. Drohat is also a graduate of the Senior Executive Management Development Program.

As Systems Development Team Lead, Drohat's job will be to oversee the conception, development and testing of weapons systems such as Advanced Tactical FLIR, the Multifunctional Information Distribution System, the Shared Airborne Reconnaissance Pod, as well as software upgrades to the mission computers.

Greg Drohat



F/A-18 Photographer Reaches 1,000 Flight Hours

It took 22 years, two months, and two days, but it was well worth it for Navy photographer Randy Hepp who reached 1000 flight hours, January 13, in an F/A-18 aircraft. Hepp reached the milestone as he was photo chasing another F/A-18 at NAVAIR Patuxent River, Md.

"It was a great moment," said Hepp; "I got my patch in the back seat of an F/A-18B with Capt. Jim Galanie in the driver's seat. I have a total of 4,359 flights in 32 different aircraft, and have come close to 1,000 hours in several of them, so I never thought I would reach 1000 in the Hornet."



Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy

Randy Hepp (pictured right) and Capt. Jim Galanie celebrate Hepp's 1000 flight hour in an F/A-18.

Out and About With The Fleet



At sea aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) Jan. 15, 2003 – An F/A-18C Hornet assigned to the “War Party” of Strike Fighter Squadron Eight Seven (VFA-87) launches from the ship’s flight deck during night time flight operations. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer’s Mate 1st Class James Foehl.

At sea aboard USS *Constellation* (CV 64) Jan. 3, 2003 – An F-18C Hornet assigned to the “Vigilantes” of Strike Fighter Squadron One Five One (VFA-151) launches off one of four steam-driven catapults on the ship’s flight deck. *Constellation* is on a regularly scheduled six-month deployment conducting combat missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer’s Mate 2nd Class Richard Moore.



At sea aboard USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) Jan. 17, 2003 – The sun rises behind an F/A-18 Hornet strike fighter aircraft parked and secured on the ship’s flight deck, as the U.S. Navy guided missile destroyer USS *Donald Cook* (DDG-75) patrols just aft of the ship. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer’s Mate 3rd Class Danny Ewing Jr.

Hornet Reserve Squadron Aboard Roosevelt



U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 1st Class James Foehl

An F/A-18A Hornet assigned to the "Hunters" of VFA-201 is prepared for launch off the flight deck of the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) as the guided missile frigate USS *Carr* (FFG 52) comes up to the ship's port side.

F/A-18 Public Affairs Office

F/A-18 Strike Fighter Squadron 201, "The Hunters," has been called into active duty and is currently serving aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71). The *Roosevelt* is currently underway conducting training missions in the Atlantic Ocean.

Squadron Cmdr. Tom Marotta, said, "VFA-201 is celebrating its thirty-third year as a Naval Reserve Squadron and we have never been more prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow."

VFA-201, based out of Fort Worth, Texas, was commissioned in July 1970 as part of Carrier Air Wing Twenty (CVWR-20) during the reorganization of the Naval Reserve Force. The result was a fully operational fighting force consisting of complete squadrons ready to deploy on immediate assignment to

an aircraft carrier in the event of a national emergency. In January 1999 the Hunters transitioned to the F/A-18 Hornet and were re-designated VFA-201 to signify its multi-mission capability as a Strike Fighter Squadron.



Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Navy Class James K. McNeil

Aviation Ordnancemen assigned to VFA-201 load bombs under the wing of an F/A-18 Hornet on the Roosevelt's flight deck.